

THE DIPLOMATIC BACKGROUND OF
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K. What did Sazonoff say to Grey at Balmoral in 1912 ?

I. I am afraid I must not quote our documents after 1909 before they are published.

K. He must have thoroughly alarmed Grey about a Balkan explosion; for the Foreign Office then became extremely anxious for Anglo-German co-operation.

K. I was spending a week-end at Polesden Lacey (Mrs. Ronald Greville's country house) about 1913. The visitors' book there would give the date* Iswolsky was there. I shall never forget our conversation. He said Russia would give any terms to Germany if she would desert Austria and allow Russia to smash her. He was not anti-German, but he was passionately anxious for war with Austria.

I. What a curious legend it was that you were mischief-making in Ulster just before the war !

K. Yes. I was recalled from my leave in Germany at the end of July, 1914. On reaching London I went to Haldane's house on the afternoon of Sunday, August 2. I advised England to stand out at first, and then, after the first shock of arms, to dictate peace by a threat of intervention. Only thus could the war be localized and shortened, and the complete exhaustion of one side or the other be prevented. Haldane was interested, seemed to sympathise with the idea, and said he would bring it before the Cabinet for discussion. Grey now appeared, and I restated my view. He replied in effect that he had an honourable obligation to France. I was surprised by the picture of Haldane as warlike in Morley's Memorandum on Resignation. His talk on August 2 with me was quite the reverse.

K. The world war, in my view, was the war of the dissolution of the Austrian Empire. Franco-German relations would probably have improved with time, and Anglo-German relations were over the worst. Both these problems were infinitely simpler than the Austro-Russian antagonism. War was difficult to avert if Vienna, not Berlin, was in control.

I. As she was from the coming of
Aehrenthal till 1914.

K. Yes, except when Kiderlen was in
command. Had he lived
he would not have given Austria a blank
cheque on July 5, 1914,
and he would probably have prevented
war.

I. Lichnowsky also thought that the war
was caused by Berlin
surrendering the leadership to Vienna.

K. Lichnowsky had family reasons
(through his father) as well as
political conviction for his hostility to
Austria.

I. Jagow denies that Berlin was taken in
tow by Vienna.

K. That is because he was in office
himself, but it is true.